

# Climate Change Communication and English Language Teaching

**Would you like to be able to explain climate change to your English language learners in five facts or ten words?**

**Come explore climate change communication in the English language classroom!**

In this webinar, we will:

- focus on identifying five facts that everyone should know about climate change
- review climate change vocabulary and vocabulary teaching tips
- examine templates for stating climate change facts versus opinions
- explore ideas for incorporating climate change topics in ELT



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Sheila recently earned her Doctorate in Postsecondary Educational Leadership and Policy at Portland State University. She also holds a BA in Biology and a MA TESOL Studies, and she is a Diplomaed Artist. Sheila is fluent in English, German, and Swiss-German. Her teaching career has taken her to many countries including Burma, Ecuador, South Korea, South Sudan, Sudan, Thailand, and Vietnam ... so far!



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# Climate Change Communication & English Language Teaching

Dr. Sheila Mullooly



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# Webinar Objectives

- Discuss climate change's impact on the world
- Cover Five Facts, Ten Words about Climate Change
- Explore ways to include climate change communication in EFL classrooms



“There is no planet B.”

# Climate Change

- Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.
- Climate change is *not* experienced equally across the world.





# Five Facts, Ten Words

To simplify the scientific complexity of climate change, we can focus on communicating 5 facts that everyone should know about climate change.

**Scientists agree.**

**It's real.**

**It's us.**

**It's bad.**

**...There's hope!**



# Fact One: It's real.

- Studies have linked global warming and weather disasters.
- Its impact is seen around the world.



## Vocabulary

extreme weather events  
increased global temperatures  
increased CO2 & greenhouse gases  
melting polar ice  
climate disasters  
grassroots adaptation  
recovery strategies

# Rising Temperatures

## Pacific NW Heat Dome June 24-29, 2021

- 118 F / 47 C
- Portland, Oregon USA





# Your turn!

**What is the hottest temperature you have ever experienced on Earth?**

Via chat box, please share your:

1. Hottest temperature in degrees C or F
2. Where on Earth



**All Participate:  
Please respond by chat.**

## Fact Two: It's us. (human-caused)

- The biggest polluters are in the richest half of the world.
- The effects of climate change are unequal around the world.
- Humans are the cause; however, we can also be the solution!



## Fact Three: It's bad.

- Climate change causes extreme weather, heatwaves, wildfires, flooding, food/water shortages, & other health threats.
- Around the world, vulnerable people are impacted by climate disasters the most.





# Let's hear from you!

**What's one way your community  
has been impacted by climate change effects?**



## **Fact Four: Scientists agree.**

**97% of climate scientists agree we're causing global warming.**





# Fact Five: There's hope!

- Clean/fusion energy, plastic-eating organisms, carbon-neutral/negative concrete, and extracting water from air are signals of hope.
- Bonus: The ozone hole is shrinking.





# A story of Hope



Sou, Risha, Sims and Ziervogel (2022)

**Faruk's watermelon  
seeds are an example  
of climate hope!**

**Scientists agree.**

**It's real.**

**It's us.**

**It's bad.**

**...There's hope!**

# Let's hear from you!

**What's one way your community  
is working to address climate change?**



# Webinar Objectives

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“There is no planet B.”



# Teaching Resource 1



## Assignment 1:

### Everyday Climate Change Storytelling & Climate Hope Comics

#### Part 1

- Ask students to **interview someone much older** (parent, grandparent, trusted elder; in L1) & **take notes** (in English).

#### Part 2

- **Create everyday climate change stories & climate hope comics.** (Work alone or in teams. Host a mini comic show. View & discuss.)





# Teaching Resource 1



## Teaching with Comics and Graphic Novels

**Level:** Beginner; Intermediate

**Objectives:** asking questions; note-taking; storytelling in words/drawings; student imagination/creativity; intergenerational connections; climate action hope

**Materials:** pen/pencil; paper/notebook; sample comic art

**See:** American English: Teaching with Comics & Graphic Novels





# Teaching Resource 1



## Part 1: Conduct Living with Climate Change interviews

- (greet & exchange pleasantries; explain homework assignment; ask for a 20 minute conversation; be prepared to spend 1 hour; show gratitude)

**What is the hottest temperature you have ever experienced?**

- (Where? When? How hot?)

**During your lifetime, have you noticed long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns?**

**How have you adapted to these climate changes?**

- (What were they like? How did you do it? Please describe.)



# Teaching Resource 1



## Living with Climate Change Notetaking

- Who?
- Why?
- How hot?
- Where? How long?
- Climate change effects?
- Climate change adaptations?



# Teaching Resource 1



## Instructions:

- **Conduct interviews & Take notes**
- **Present (3 minutes) interview summaries** in teams & turn in notes
- **Brainstorm Everyday Climate Change Stories** in teams (30 minutes)
- **Create Climate Hope Comics** (60 minutes in-class/homework)
- **Hold a gallery walk through** (60 minutes)



# Teaching Resource 1



## Comic Assessment:

- How memorable are the comics?
- How authentic are the voices in the stories?
- How authentic are the artistic fingerprints in the art works?

## English Assessment:

- Spelling/Vocabulary use?
- Grammar use?
- Communicative competence?



**Why would your students  
enjoy learning with comics &  
graphic novels?**





# Teaching Resource 2



## Assignment 2: Let's talk!

1. Write a statement or discussion prompt on the board.
2. Break students into small groups. (3-12 ideal/20 students possible)
3. Assign a discussion leader, notetaker, reporter. (5 minutes for step 1&2)
4. Groups discuss and share their opinions with one another. (20+ minutes)
5. During the discussion, students take notes about their group's discussion.
6. Each group shares a summary of their group's discussion with the larger class. (20+ minutes)  
(Report: Number of Pro/Con Opinions; Reasons for Opinions; Facts/Opinions)



# Teaching Resource 2



## Discussing Opinions & Giving Reasons/Facts

**Level:** Beginner; Intermediate; Advanced

**Objectives:** expressing/eliciting opinions; giving facts/reasons; using cause & effect to state facts; notetaking; giving summaries

**Materials:** chalk board; pen/pencil; paper/notebook

**Small group discussion space:** Get creative. Have a standing meeting. Meet in your campus cafeteria or under a shade tree. Walk & talk.

## Activity 2: Discussion Prompt



**Most people think global warming is mainly human-caused.**

Do you agree? Why? Why not? Why not yet?  
Have you always had this opinion? How have your thoughts changed over time?

Share what you think. Give your opinion and use facts and beliefs to support your answer.

## Activity 2: More Discussion Prompts



- Climate change is a menace to our world.
- Most people think global warming requires urgent climate action.
- We need heroic leaders for change. We can have a crucial impact on our planet.



**What language would  
students need before doing  
this discussion?**



# Scaffold: Discussing Facts templates

## Fact = Cause & Effect

1. Burning fossil fuels dramatically increases greenhouse gas emissions.

[ cause ] ...dramatically increases... [ effect ].

2. Increased greenhouse gas emissions lead to rising global temperatures and subsequently climate change/climate crisis.

[ cause ] ...leads to rising...[ primary effect ] ...and subsequently [ secondary effect ].



# Scaffold: Discussing Opinions templates

Opinion = **“We can have a crucial (needed) impact on our planet.”**

Expressing an opinion & giving reasons: **Do you agree? Why? Why not? Why not yet?**

Eliciting an opinion: **What’s your opinion? What do you think? Have you always had this opinion? How have your thoughts changed over time?**



# Scaffold: Opinion Sentence Starters

In my opinion, . . .  
Personally, I think . . .  
I believe . . .  
I would argue . . .  
Some say . . .





# Let's Talk! Adaption Ideas

**Online classes:** Discussion post & respond to classmates; Video post; Email exchange; Write a letter to a Climate Action Hero

**Levels:** 3 opinions; 3 facts/reasons; 3 beliefs/fears/hopes

**Evidence:** Show your research; 3 academic sources

**Ages:** Use imagination to visualize sustainable futures for humanity

**See:** UNSDG Climate Action Superhero Missions  
(United Nations Sustainable Development Goals)

**How would you adapt Let's  
Talk! for your class?**





# Teaching Resource 3



## Assignment 3: Signals of Climate Hope

- Individual or Group Research Project
- Research how another location on Earth is adapting to climate change
  - **How is the location experiencing climate effects?**
  - **What are they doing about them?**
  - **What can we learn from their everyday climate change stories of recovery and adaptation?**



# Remember: There's hope!

- Clean/fusion energy, plastic-eating organisms, carbon-neutral/negative concrete, and extracting water from air are signals of hope.
- Bonus: The ozone hole is shrinking.





# Activity 3

## Signals of Climate Hope Outline

**Paragraph 1:** Introduce Location/Issue

**Paragraph 2:** Local Climate Change Effects

**Paragraph 3:** Local Responses/Adaptations

**Paragraph 4:** Climate Lessons Learned

**Paragraph 5:** Conclusion



**Whitest White paint beats the heat!**

# Activity 3 Adaption Ideas

- **For lower levels**, assign a 2-3 minute presentation or write 1 paragraph.
- **For online classes**, ask students to post videos and discussion posts; e-portfolios.
- **For intermediate levels**, make it a 5-paragraph general essay.
- **For more advanced students**, require research writing with 3-5 citations.
- **Explore the resilience of humanity in action!**
- **The future is now!**



"The Climate Is Changing, So Should We! #ACTNOW."

# Let's hear from you!

**What's one way you encourage students to  
be hopeful about the future?**





# Teaching Resource 4



## Teaching Climate Change Vocabulary

- Spelling Bee Game
- Teacher says part of speech/definition
- Students race to spell term
- First student to get the word on the board correctly wins a point for their team
- Prize for winning team





# Climate Change Vocabulary List

Global warming [N]  
Climate change [N]  
To affect [V]  
Equally [adv]  
To impact [V]  
Long-term [adj]  
To shift [V]  
Temperatures [N]  
Weather patterns [N]  
Climate injustice/justice [N]  
Hot, hotter, hottest [adj]  
Heat dome [N]  
Complexity [N]  
Melting polar ice [N]  
Increased CO2 [N]  
Greenhouse gas [N]  
Extreme weather events [N]  
Climate disasters [N]

Grassroots adaptations [N]  
Recovery strategies [N]  
Fossil fuels - coal, oil, natural gas [N]  
Industrial Revolution [N]  
Human-caused [adj]  
Biggest polluters [N]  
Emissions [N]  
To dramatically increase/decrease [V]  
Climate crisis [N]  
Primary effect [N]  
Secondary effect [N]  
Wildfires [N]  
Heatwaves [N]  
Rising sea levels [N]  
Food shortages [N]  
Health threat [N]  
Humanity [N]  
Climate scientists [N]



Earth [N]  
Climate change effects {N}  
Radical/Climate Hope [N]  
Renewable energy [N]  
Sustainable futures [N]

# Let's hear from you!



## What other activities do you do to help students learn new vocabulary?



# Teaching Resource 5



## Assignment 5: Letter to Past or Future Self

- Invite your students to **read & reflect** on quotes related to climate change.
- Ask them to respond to one or more quotes by **writing a letter to themselves...**
  - Dear Past Self 10 years ago, ...
  - Dear Future Self 10 years in the future, ...



# Example Quote

**“I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it.”**

— Adrienne Maree Brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds





# Activity 5

**Dear Me 10 yrs. in the Past/Future,**

**Paragraph 1: Quote & Reflections**

**Paragraph 2: Imagining Sustainable Futures**

**Paragraph 3: If I were a Climate Action Superhero,  
here's what I would think, do, and speak about.**

**Warmly,**

**Your Name**



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# Let's hear from you!

**UNSDG Climate Action Superheroes:** (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals)

Truth Talker; Fume Fighter; Green Guide; Recycling Ranger;

Veggie Vindicator; Energy Expert; Fashion Fixer; Water Wizard

**Your Pick: If you were a Climate Action Superhero...**

- Who would you be? Why?
- What superpowers would you have?
- Bonus: Create your own Climate Action Superhero!



# References

- Sou, G., Risha, A.N., Sims, C., and Ziervogel, G. (2022). Everyday Stories of Climate Change. RMIT University and The University of Manchester. <https://gemmasou.com/everyday-stories-of-climate-change/>
- Teaching with Comics and Graphic Novels [americanenglish.state.gov](http://americanenglish.state.gov)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Climate Action Superhero Missions <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-action-superheroes/>
- Yale Climate Connections Climate Explained: Introductory Essays About Climate Change Topics <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Climate-Explained-pdf16.pdf>

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# Thank you!

**Questions or concerns?**

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# Reflection Questions

1. How do you introduce and reinforce theme-specific vocabulary? How can you create several opportunities for students to interact with or use new words and phrases?
2. What instructional approaches and practice activities can help students evaluate and express facts and opinion-based information?
3. When teaching or talking about difficult topics like climate change, how might teachers help students feel hopeful or like they can make a positive difference with their actions and problem-solving skills?



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